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NSC WASHINGTON DC  
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AMCONSUL PESHAWAR

C O N F I D E N T I A L PESHAWAR 000389

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PK](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: FRONTIER CORPS COMMANDER ON FATA OPERATIONS, COOPERATION  
WITH US/AFGHAN FORCES

REF: PESHAWAR 381

CLASSIFIED BY: Michael A. Via, Acting Principal Officer, Peshawar, DOS.  
REASON: 1.4 (a), (b), (d)

Summary  
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11. (C) Frontier Corps Commander Khattak and 11th Corps Chief of Staff Aamer Riaz briefed NSC Senior Director for South and Central Asia Mark Webber on their strategy for the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) on July 3. Khattak and Aamer were on message with other Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) officials by stating that "successful" operations in Swat and Khyber as well as North and South Waziristan were aimed at opening the way for development. Khattak, who remained focused throughout the meeting on long-term capacity building rather than addressing the recognized immediate and pressing terrorist threat in the border regions, continued to press for more U.S. assistance to provide personal protective gear for his troops and noted that collaboration with Afghan security counterparts is helped by U.S. participation. Isolating militant commanders such as Baitullah Mehsud from "reconcilable" tribesmen will allow Pakistani security forces to confront these leaders without fear of collateral damage. While there are encouraging signs of increased coordination between Governor Ghani and the Frontier Corps, Khattak still appears to be frustrated by equipment shortfalls for his troops. End Summary.

Frontier Corps Commander on FATA Strategy  
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12. (C) Frontier Corps Commander Major General Mohammad Alam Khattak noted that "undertakings" with tribesmen in Swat as well as North and South Waziristan are aimed at creating stability which will allow development to proceed. He said that force may be used to enforce these "undertakings" with the tribes. According to the Commander, a "pure use of force is not the answer; rather, we need a comprehensive approach." He stated that he needed "immediate employment" to give alternatives to the FATA's youth. Development should take place on a "war footing: fast and big." (Comment: Khattak is on message with Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) Governor Owais Ghani, who also intends to use peace talks to create "space" for development and also considers the understanding reached with tribal elders to be a one-sided acceptance of GOP demands, rather than a bilateral peace agreement. End comment.)

13. (C) Responding to Senior Director Webber's concern over a growing terrorist threat in the border regions, increased violence levels in Afghanistan, and growing cross-border

violence, Khattak said that he was "confident" that his troops could overcome these challenges. According to Khattak, the aim the current FATA strategy is to win over "the silent majority" and to isolate militant groups but offered no information how Pakistani security forces were making progress in this area. Khattak said that he remains concerned about inflicting collateral damage during military operations and remarked that military strikes in the border regions could be counterproductive and increase violence levels. He claimed, however, that the public's opinion of the Frontier Corps is positive due to the perception that the armed services are "backing" the political government.

¶4. (C) Like Governor Ghani, Khattak attributes growing unrest in the FATA and NWFP to problems in Afghanistan. "Cross border movement is a problem for us too," he said. According to Khattak, Afghanistan's "poppy-riddled" eastern flank is the "engine that drives the insurgency." When pressed on addressing the short-term threat, Khattak suggested that poppy eradication should be the highest priority, noting Pakistan's success in eliminating the scourge in Pakistan. The Commander repeated a request that he had previously addressed to Counselor Eliot Cohen (reftel) to increase the number of ISAF troops on the Pakistan/Afghanistan border.

#### FATA Operations

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¶5. (C) Khattak characterized recent military operations in North and South Waziristan as "very successful" and said that they have led to decreased cross-border attacks. The Commander said that operations in Khyber agency's Bara area have achieved their objective of increasing the security of Peshawar's perimeter with a "minimal" amount of force. He claimed, however, that the media is "making us jump when they want us to jump." Khattak stressed a need to supplement the Frontier Corps' "conventional" tactics with efforts to enlist the support of tribal lashkars (militias) in the fight against insurgents. These grass roots level groups could serve as "force multipliers, as they do in Iraq," he said.

#### Cooperation with the United States

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¶6. (C) The Frontier Corps Commander provided a gloomy outlook on U.S. military assistance in recent years. "For two and a half years, there has been a lot of talking, but very little done except INL funding." He said that the 500-600 vehicles provided by INL have served as the "main strength of our mobility," but the majority of his troops remain "ill equipped." Khattak was critical that more than half of the USD 30 million aid program had been allocated to the Warsak training center which would most likely not open until December. Khattak implied that the construction delay was indicative of the lack of U.S. interest in supporting the Frontier Corps. He said that the Pakistani Army had provided him tanks and artillery, but he requires better personal protective equipment, communications and mobility capabilities (reftel). Senior Director Webber asserted that the Frontier Corps should not stall on implementing those cooperating programs which have already commenced while the Frontier Corps campaigns for other aid.

#### Coordination with Afghan Security Forces

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¶7. (C) Khattak stated that tripartite cooperation among Pakistan, Afghanistan and the United States is proceeding well at the general headquarters level and said that officers are meeting frequently. He said that border flag meetings have been productive but lamented that communications between Pakistan and Afghanistan had not progressed more rapidly. At the micro-level, Webber inquired about cross border post communication and cooperation and whether the outposts had adequate communications equipment and procedures. Chief of Staff to the 11th Corps Commander, Brigadier Aamer Riaz noted that cross-border cooperation works better with U.S. participation and implied that "hesitation" among posts solely occupied by Afghan troops may be due to long-standing grudges.

He acknowledged more work needed to be done to improve outpost cooperation across the border.

#### Confronting Insurgents

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18. (C) Chief of Staff Riaz stated that distinguishing between reconcilable and irreconcilable militants is becoming increasingly difficult. Riaz believes, however, that even madrassa students and those who have "taken up arms" may still be reconcilable. He said that a misperception among common Pakistanis that the Army and Frontier Corps is fighting "America's war" is damaging efforts to reconcile potential militants. Khattak stated that the United States could assist in this effort by "reducing its signature and increasing assistance."

19. (C) Chief of Staff Riaz stated that the Army and Frontier Corps must "deal with" Baitullah Mehsud, the Haqqani network, Mullah Omar, Hekmatyar and other militant commanders, and that Pakistan's security forces should not let these insurgents "provoke them." Both Riaz and Khattak stated that the best way to do this is to "isolate" militant leaders from the tribal society and then carry out surgical operations against them.

#### Assessment of FATA's Other Security Forces

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10. (C) Responding to Political Counselor's query about other security forces operating in the FATA, Khattak said that each tier "has its own role and relevance." "All should be employed," he said, "but we should invest in the Frontier Corps, police (in the settled areas), and the Khassadars." Khattak believes that the investing in the Khassadars is preferable to assisting the Levies because tribesmen are "used to the Khassadars." He said that the Levies are still new and it will take time for them to properly integrate into the tribal culture. (Note: Khassadars are considered to represent a tribe and positions are usually passed from father to son. Khassadars provide their own rifles and uniforms. End note.)

VIA